

1. Background

Essex Ham is an online amateur radio community with over 3,500 members. It is one of the UK’s largest training providers, with over 10,400 candidates enrolling onto the group’s online Foundation training courses to date.

In order to gauge how the UK amateur radio community views the changes proposed in the Ofcom consultation, Essex Ham ran an online survey between 24 June and 03 September 2023.

461 complete responses were received, and this document summarises the survey results.

It is hoped that this information provides some useful data for Ofcom when reviewing the consultation feedback.

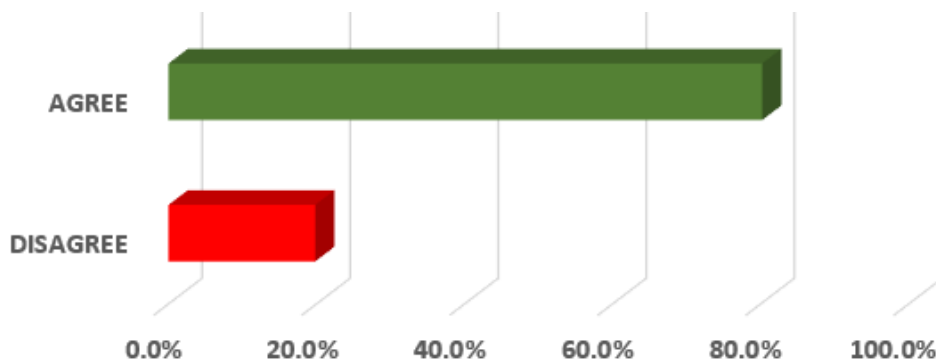
2. Responses to questions

Question 1 (section 3): One licence

Do you agree with our proposal that each licensee should only be able to hold one personal licence?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
32.0%	40.2%	7.8%	10.0%	10.0%



Sample of “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” responses:

- *No practical purpose is served by having more than one license. The forced surrender of low levels of license will allow the reuse of old callsigns.*
- *It is silly having several callsigns, it has no relevance. Great idea to simplify it and it will help with admin for Ofcom*

Question 1 (section 3): One licence

- *I surrendered my M6 and 2E0 licences voluntarily in order to (1) help keep the statistics about how many licences are on issue accurate and (2) to have less bureaucracy for me to deal with... I only have to renew one licence now rather than three!*
- *Seems fair as why would you use your foundation call sign if you held a full license?*
- *I don't really think that there is a need for more than one licence. A person with more than one licence could easily mislead others and I strongly believe in transparency.*
- *There is absolutely NO POINT in retaining lower grade callsigns, as these can be reallocated to other individuals as permitted. Furthermore it is confusing & unworkable in practice, especially in contests. Operators at present are UNABLE to check 'On Line' if a callsign is legitimate - vis:- has been officially (5 year) revalidated at OFCOM. It also 'OPENS -THE-DOOR' to BOGUS, ABUSIVE & offensive character callsigns. There needs to be 100% simplicity, CLARITY here, or it will 'end up' with CBER style abuse/operating.*

Sample of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses:

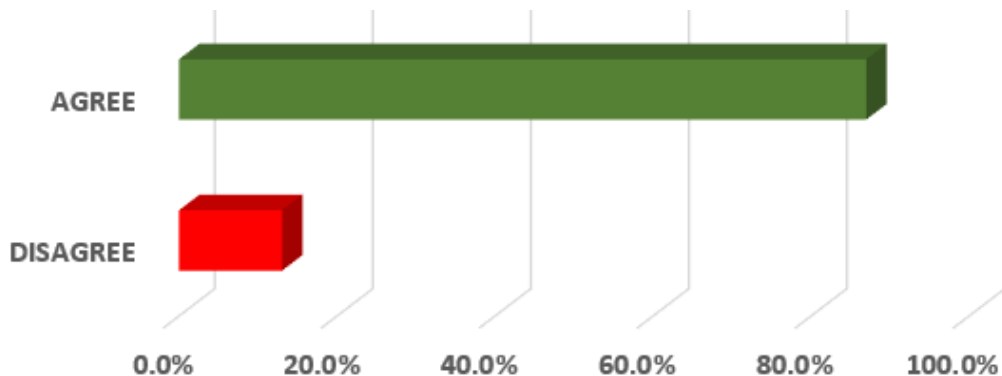
- *Not sure they have provided a sound rationale for this. If it is to free up licences, they can do so by reissuing old callsigns. If they say it is an administrative burden to operate up to three individual licences then i don't buy it - that is all automated so it's not a valid line. Personally, I think unless they offer a good reason to do this, there is no reason to accept it. So at present i'm strongly disagree because it's a negative to those who earned those licences to just have them removed - more specifically, the ability to choose to use the callsigns.*
- *Some of us have registered internet domains, e-mail addresses, provided copies of these licenses for online portal logins, & run logbooks etc under these call signs & removing them will cause us problems – especially when trying to re-authorise logins where we have to provide a current valid version of the license that we opened the account with. Some of us have invested in clothing and signage for our personal or station use. This is clearly marked & associated with these existing licensed call signs. Some of us have an established brand &/or internet presence on social media sites such as FaceBook, YouTube etc. under the call signs attached to our licenses.*
- *I like having choice and I am proud of my M3 licence , also costs nothing to keep it*
- *I worked hard for my licences, I do not want to surrender them.*

Question 2 (section 3): Supervised use

Do you agree with our proposals to permit greater supervised use of the radio equipment by others?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
34.9%	49.6%	7.9%	4.8%	2.8%



Sample of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses:

- *Amateur radio needs to encourage new users of every age and making this easier would be beneficial. You only have to go to a rally to see the hobby is currently dominated by elderly people, which is fine, but doesn't bode well for the future.*
- *Brilliant. This will inspire younger people in the field of electronics and wireless. Great idea.*
- *It is or has the potential to be an expensive hobby. I don't buy a set of golf clubs before trying golf. Before I was licensed there was no means to try the hobby or you operated illegally or on CB. Supervised access would be great at special events or with family. I was going to suggest a /s suffix for supervised but that could now be a good option to allow other hams know there is a novice and engage in an encouraging and welcoming manner.*
- *What a great way to help encourage people into the hobby.*
- *Absolutely. This is common in other countries. See no reason why it should not be more liberal here.*
- *My grandchildren, who are far too young to realistically take the Foundation exam, are very interested in my shack. I think it is likely that at least one of them would soon take up the opportunity to operate under supervision.*
- *Yes a good way to introduce people to the subject without a commitment*

Sample of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses:

- *This could lead to the degradation of standards and amateur radio just becoming an extended 11meters. Inexperienced operators would allow anyone and everyone to operate under their supervision to show off to their mates. Being able to supervise non licensed operators is a privilege that should be reserved for full license holders.*

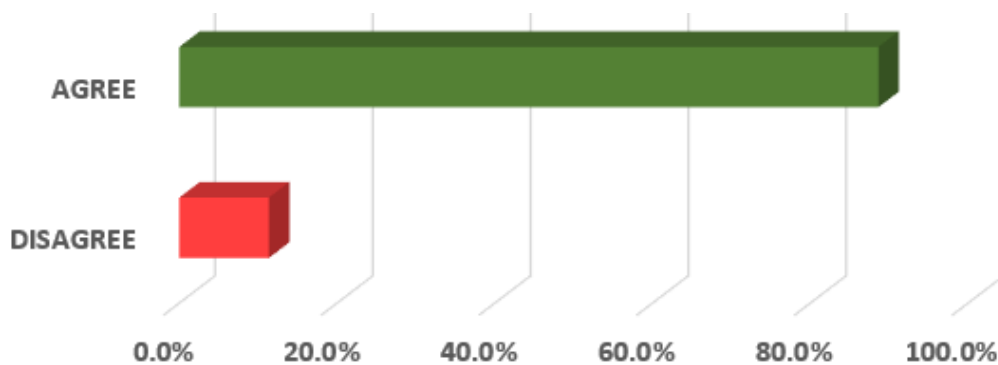
- *Special event stations should be the only people to supervise non licensed people operating radios. What stops me allowing anybody to constantly operate under my callsign without putting in the effort to get a license. Ridiculous idea.*
- *Full licencee only*

Question 3 (section 4): M8 and M9 Call sign

Do you agree with our proposal to use M8 and M9 for Intermediate licensees going forward?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
29.9%	45.5%	6.6%	3.1%	14.9%



Sample of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses:

- *The current 2E0 callsign is an anomaly and ugly. This brings it into line with the other licenses in offer.*
- *Those 2X0 2X1 callsigns are dreadful, they don't fit in with the other UK callsigns, I would go further and make the move compulsory!*
- *I hated the 2*0 call so much I never used it; just took the advanced exam at the earliest opportunity...*
- *Having held a 2E0 callsign recently I can tell you that sending it and getting it received correctly it was painful in morse code!*
- *The 2x0 and 2x1 callsigns are often difficult to hear and overseas stations often struggle with them. I know many individuals with 2E0 calls who would jump at the chance to swap it for an M call.*
- *Definitely agree here, from my days of SWL the amount of 2E0 and 2MO struggling to put across phonetically, their intermediate calls.. Add QRM/N QSB into the mix it makes it a nightmare for hams to get their call across to weaker dx.*

Sample of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses:

- *I don't understand this one. I believe "2" callsigns pre-date "M" by several years. "2" should continue to be used for intermediate until exhaustion, at least in the "2x0" and "2x1" formats ("M9" may then be used, for example).*
- *I like my 2e its personal i do not agree with forced changes i will keep mine 2e0*

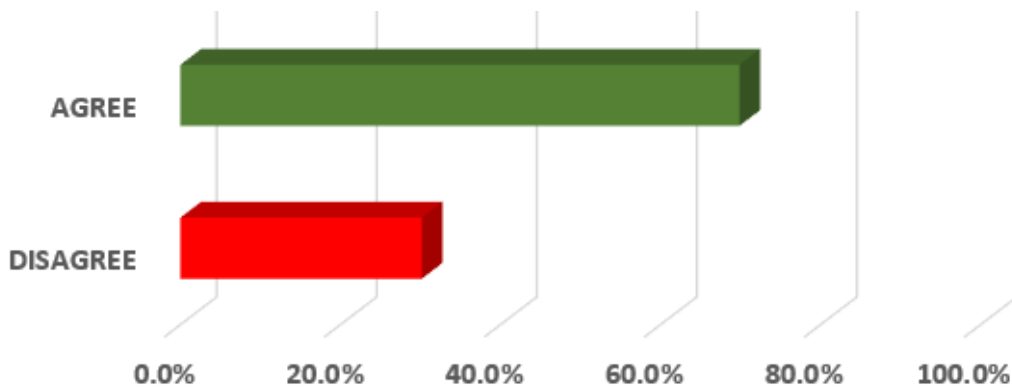
- *As stated, I started out as a 2E1 that was a good step forward for me, I learnt many skills that are not taught today.*

Question 4 (section 4): RSLs

Do you agree with our proposals to change our policies on the use of RSLs?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
17.6%	42.9%	11.8%	14.4%	13.3%



Sample of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses:

- *The RSL system is discriminatory and illogical. Either it should be mandatory for all holders regardless of location (ME7DPV is what my callsign should read) or totally optional.*
- *Allowing all levels to use "E" for England makes sense.*
- *Agree to add E for England. Disagree about making my MM optional, it is important to me to know people can tell I am calling from Scotland.*
- *It's easy enough and most do advise location during a contact. It is not universal to have RSL's or where there are nominally, they do not verify the location of a Station. Amateurs in America for example, can secure a callsign in one state, move to another state (permanently) but keep their original RSL. Your actual location in any contact is taken in good faith, RSL or not.*
- *Always seemed a bit silly that non-English hams had to use an additional locator as we're the UK after all... Being optional it allows those who like it to continue to do so.*
- *Despite living in London, I think it's extremely rude to require other nations to have a longer call sign than England.*
- *Yep, should be up to the end user whether they use one or not.*
- *English stations have the advantage for DX with one less letter in callsign. A level playing field is fair.*
- *yes i agree with this. It seems a bit of a needless national pride not to add an E when operating from England.*
- *Yeah they're all silly really and unnecessary*
- *This simplifies admin . I suspect non GE calls will retain their RSL's and those of us in England wont bother. I will use GM GW GI etc when I travel though*

- Lot better to understand

Sample of “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree” responses:

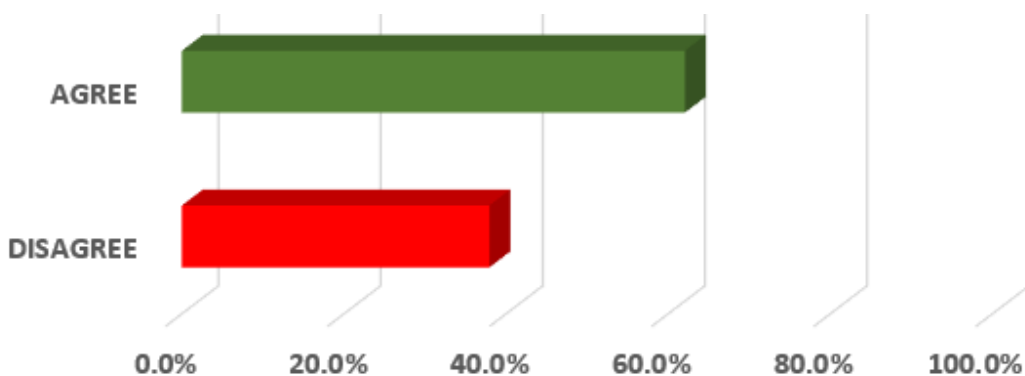
- Not a good idea, regional call sign is a good idea in a country which is a union of smaller countries, its not like we are the US and have states which form a country, we have countries that form a kingdom, so i think the secondary locator should stay!
- This is going to be confusing. I can understand they haven't just said get rid of altogether because it's your callsign and you're known by it if you're outside of England. Maybe for new licences the RSL isn't used.
- I think they should stay, the different countries within the UK are separate entities for DX and awards, so it would be confusing to drop them. I would be happy to add E to my England callsign, scrapping the NoV reduces admin work so sensible.
- Its really not a good idea, as it will affect global competition awards as well as UK ones.
- DXCC entities (from ITU region 27 list) include separate calls for the nations of the UK.
- I believe the standard RSL format has been used since about the 1950s or maybe earlier? Why change it when low/no demand to do so?
- I feel they are trying to fix some things that are not broken.
- I strongly disagree with the optional use of RSLs and the option to use ME or GE. The current arrangements are well understood and have worked well for decades.

Question 5 (section 4): Suffixes

Do you agree with our proposals to allow the use of any suffix?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
18.5%	35.9%	21.4%	11.9%	12.3%



Sample of “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” responses:

- See /POTA and /QRP frequently already, should be adopted and normalized. If people want to keep on using /M, /P, etc. they should be allowed to do so. It makes identifying interesting users easier.
- I'm sure we will still use them but it could be fun to see what people will use.
- In my experience many hams get these wrong most of the time anyway
- Again, another arbitrary and unnecessary process.

- *Again it's optional. As it is already optional, maybe it should have been removed from the exam syllabus*
- *Existing suffixes are very unclear. Optional -probably long form- suffixes make more sense.*

Sample of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses:

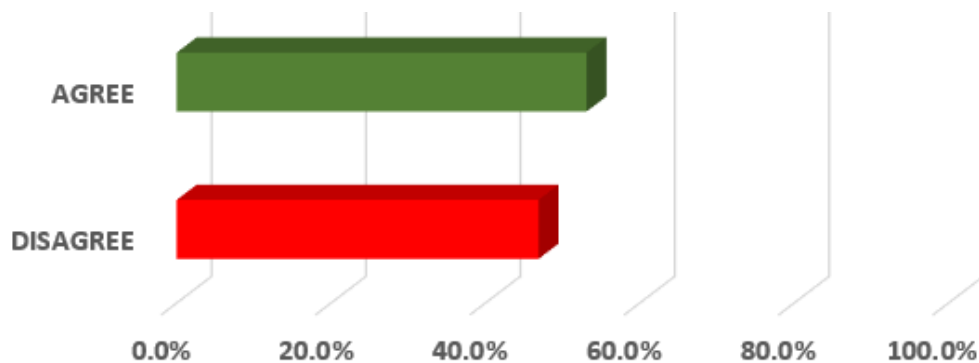
- *Useful to know when people are in more challenging situations*
- *Not keep on a possible free for all approach to suffixes, the needs to be some level of standardisation*
- *Suffixes are enough as they are and the idea to allow the use of any suffix that anyone chooses to grab out of thin air doesn't seem to be right. How would anyone know what the suffix would mean?*
- *The problem with "any suffix" is that nowhere has the content or length of that suffix been limited. They quote the use of "/NHS" as an example, but the new rule, as written, would also allow something long and offensive to be added. The new rule badly needs explicit limits added.*
- *Firstly I think the use of established suffices should be encouraged more strongly, as they are helpful and informative, and secondly I think the use of made-up suffixes should be discouraged as they are confusing esp when ppl ate using weird abbreviations.*
- *There should be a way to tell that someone is not at their Main Station Address*

Question 6 (section 4): Change call sign

Do you agree with our proposals to allow a change of call signs?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
16.5%	32.3%	23.1%	20.0%	8.1%



Sample of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses:

- *Been like this for decades in Germany and works well.*
- *I know a few who have callsigns they don't like so changing is good.*
- *Not sure about 2 years, maybe longer, 5 years?*

- *Can't see any downside to these changes though callsigns of silent keys may wish to be kept back*
- *Yes good idea. A callsign is essentially the same as a vehicle registration mark is it not?*
- *This might help do away with the bias that some stations/people have towards newer licences.*
- *Callsigns that were issued in the distant past should NOT be reissued to anyone who has no family connection with a SK amateur unless they have specific and written permission from the family concerned. Why is such a proposal necessary, it only causes confusion for other active amateurs and even distress for a living relative of the SK amateur who could hear the callsign of their dear departed on the air just two years after their death. If this proposal is absolutely necessary, then the dormant period for a previously issued callsign should be at least 75 years. Two years is quite ridiculous and un-necessary. OfCom needs to explain why they want to introduce this change. Do they feel that they will 'run out' of new callsigns, prefixes etc?*
- *Fallow period for reissues could probably do with being longer."*
- *"Agree with reissuing, bit perplexed about the option to change every two years - who and why would want to?*
- *My callsign is a pain to send in Morse - I would love to be able to change it!*

Sample of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses:

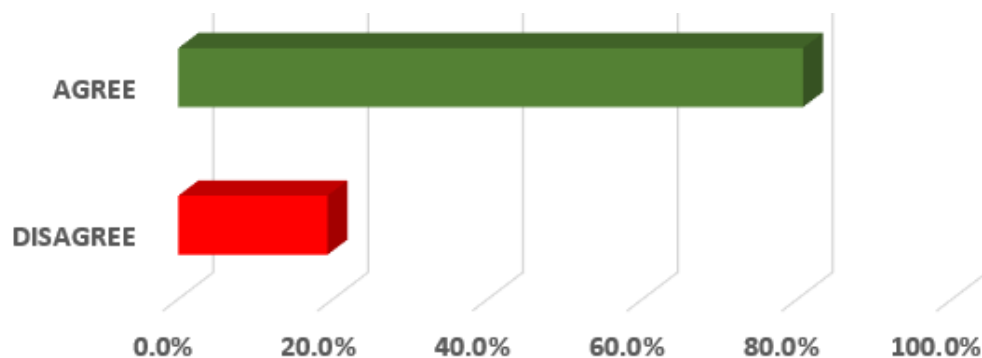
- *Once getting a licence, they should be kept. It shall be suspicious to want to change it, like trying to hide something.*
- *To be able to reissue SK or revoked call signs the period before reissue should be a lot longer than two years, maybe as much as ten or more, unless it is being reissued to a family member. I don't believe that Amateurs should be able to change their callsigns from the ones originally issued to them unless they upgrade their licences.*
- *Should never reissue callsigns unless the holder or family member agrees to that callsign being reissued. My father was licensed and went SK in 1994 I do not want to hear that callsign on the air the pain of losing family never goes away and hearing his callsign used will only bring back the pain.*
- *Once issued, it should not be able to be reused by someone else.*
- *If Ofcom are saying people can't hold multiple callsigns because it needs to be clear who the operator of the station is then doesn't this idea contradict that?*
- *I don't mind licencees changing call signs for a good reason like wanting a vanity call or late relatives call sign, but it should only be the once not every two years, you'll get some changing there's every two years for the fun of it making tracing harder. They should also keep the £20 charge.*
- *Call signs should be treated the same way as a National Insurance Number or NHS number and stick with the individual for life and never be re-issued.*
- *Very Bad idea - will lead to a "black market" in so called desirable "number plates".*
- *"SK callsigns to be retained under the stewardship of NEXT OF KIN for at least 10 years, unless it is transferred/held for club use.*
- *Some of us remember our old ham friends who are now SK, to reuse their callsign is in my opinion an affront to them*

Question 7 (section 4): Call sign limits

Do you agree with our proposals on the limits to how many call signs can be held?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
30.2%	43.6%	8.4%	9.3%	8.6%



Sample of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses:

- *There is no reason to have more than one callsign. Five callsigns for a club should in most cases be more than adequate.*
- *Cannot see a reason to have multiple call signs.*
- *Having just the one callsign will help keep the statistics of licences on issue more accurate.*
- *Why have a lower power licence when you can reduce power on any licence.*
- *How many personal callsigns do you need?*
- *5 calls for Clubs need to be restricted to FIXED BAND working, one each for HF, VHF, UHF, Microwave, HF, LF and NOT transferable ad hoc.*
- *100% agree. It gets ridiculous sometimes when you look up a contact and there are five maybe six calls on their page. It can be confusing not only for hams but for loggers also.*
- *Inflates the numbers unnecessarily*

Sample of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses:

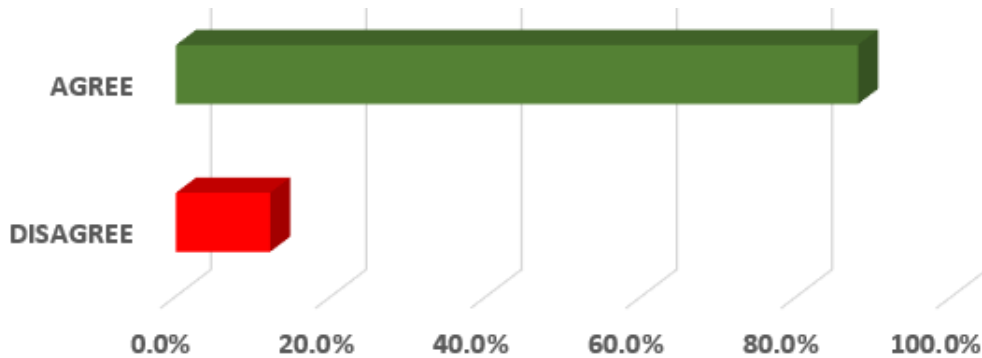
- *I hold 2 licences, intermediate and full and i worked hard to gain those and feel I am entitled to keep those licences/callsigns*
- *You have earned the license, gained the call sign, should be able to retain the call sign if you personally want to.*
- *I hold two calls and a club call sign, my personal call signs are both personal to me and I don't want to lose either of them! I totally disagree with this proposal!*
- *Many of us were/are under the impression that OFCOM would only ever revoke our licenses & call signs following a serious breach of conditions, or continued non-compliance by us the user - & not merely as a result of a process/policy change."*
- *Want to keep intermediate call sign to verify QSL cards*
- *Totally disagree, most of us worked hard to get what we have got*

Question 8 (section 4): Special event call signs

Do you agree with our proposal to simplify special event call signs?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
18.7%	48.2%	6.3%	2.9%	23.9%



Sample of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses:

- *Special events do a lot to promote the hobby.*
- *This is very welcome news. The second requirement was relaxed during lockdown anyway, without any major problems. The fourth and fifth proposals could be problematic in terms of callsign availability, but this will be more than offset by the first proposal. I have a slight concern about the final proposal, but in practice I would think that 99% of SES will be in a fixed location for a fixed event anyway.*
- *I think this allows for bigger operations with special event callsigns that make larger activations (multiple radio amateurs/multiple sites) more attractive*
- *Gives lots of options which will help expose ham radio to the public*
- *It will certainly make my life easier as the club NoV holder as we run multiple SES each year with some repeats at the same location.*
- *Yep fine but 11 characters? Gonna take an eternity to get through those in phonetics. Bit OTT isn't it?!*

Sample of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses:

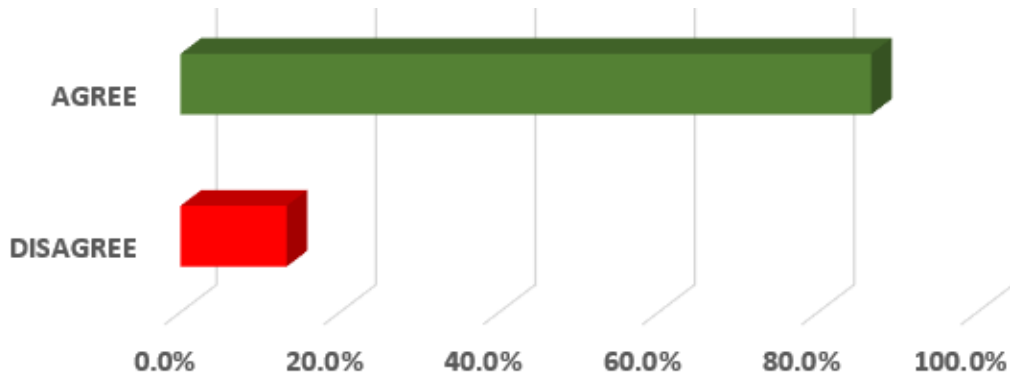
- *I'm not sure about having callsigns up to 11 characters long. Some SES callsigns are quite innovative in their use of less characters and can be "catchy".*
- *Not open to public NOT SES*
- *I agree with every bit of this except for the length of the callsign - 11 Char is frankly too long.*
- *At least the extra-long callsigns are unnecessarily ridiculous.*
- *No need to have really long calls for SES*

Question 9 (section 5): Increase transmit power

Do you agree with our proposals to increase transmit power?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
47.6%	36.2%	7.6%	5.2%	3.3%



Sample of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses:

- *I feel the power upgrade is a good idea. However, if someone buys a radio capable of running 200W the operator should be allowed to use it to its working capacity. In the U.S. all radio amateurs are given 1500 Watts at their foundation level!*
- *Most mobile radios for use in cars have 25 watt outputs. Why not allow that for Foundation?*
- *Brings us into line with many other countries*
- *Power increases are long overdue. Although I would have liked slightly more power as an M7 (25w) I won't complain with 20w.*
- *Even unlicensed CB'ers are allowed by law more than the standard 10W transmit power allocated to Foundation licence holders.*
- *I agree with the first two (3dB is not going to make a major difference anyway). I'm not sure about 1kW in built-up areas though. More amplifiers on the band = more splatter if not set up correctly and a higher noise level in general maybe(?) I wonder how many full licensees would be able to run 1kW anyway due to the recent EMF requirements?*
- *In other countries foundation licence holders have considerably more flexibility on the power level they use. America and Australia are examples.*
- *Not sure 1 kW is suitable for a small densely populated island ..."*
- *As someone interested in very weak signal VHF/UHF contacts including EME I welcome this. It brings us into line with many other European countries.*
- *Logical. Full license limit aligns with many other countries, intermediate level makes sense - not likely to cause excessive interference to others. Novice is a sensible level given the operators level of technical expertise/experience*
- *I would increase Foundation power to 25W. Marine and Business users get 25W with no technical training. More sets run 25W as an option than 20W...*
- *The point here is the recent change to the licence of doing the EMF survey / calculations etc will limit what people can do . eg in a postage size garden in a housing estate you would not be able to run 1Kw due to the EMF and close neighbours etc.*

- *No idea why anybody needs 1kw of power. A little goes a long way on HF. It's all down to conditions and your antenna.*

Sample of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses:

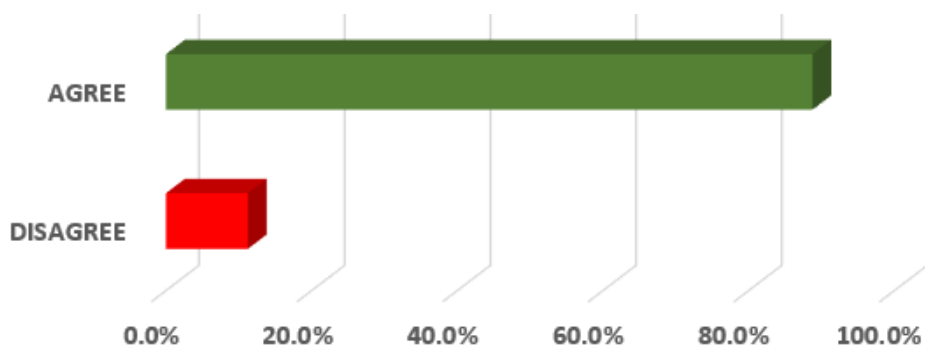
- *"I think power levels are fine as they are. Increased power levels would bring more restrictions on Amateurs with Health and Safety.*
- *Power increase is a - probably the - reason to progress.*
- *Please don't allow 1kw. There is no need, it will just create more QRM on already busy bands. If I can work the world with 5 watts, why would anyone need 1KW? I agree with changes to foundation and intermediate though*
- *1000 Watts is not appropriate for most amateurs stations. Most of us live in a suburban environment. How does this fit in with the EMF requirements that were imposed upon our stations? The bands will be filled with splattering signals. Not a good idea for the UK.*
- *Existing levels more than adequate. Regulation and planning (non-Ofcom) for antennas more important*
- *I'm happy to see the increases for Foundation and Intermediate, but I'm not enthusiastic about letting Full licences run the kW. It's unnecessary and, in the context of Britain where most of us live in densely populated urban areas with small gardens, it's likely to lead to conflict with neighbours which could reflect badly on the hobby.*

Question 10 (section 5): Remote operation

Do you agree with our proposed changes to remote control operation?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
37.0%	43.5%	6.4%	3.8%	9.3%



Sample of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses:

- *This was one of the stupidest restrictions of the whole system. Moving to the 21st century internet control of equipment and internet remote operation make sense for many people with restrictions at their QTH as well as those who travel. I would suggest the inclusion of a heartbeat requirement as a failsafe would be preferable. in this way the equipment would automatically shuts-down is network access were lost. Automatic reconnection could be allowed once network access was restored.*

- *No problems with this, it is the modern world of connectivity after all and we should evolve with it.*
- *Happy to see people allowed to experiment with newer technology this is what the hobby is all about self learning.*
- *Modernisation required. Keeping up with available technology.*
- *This has always been an anachronism*
- *Great idea! This is going to resolve so many problems regarding antenna sighting in restricted areas to enable HF use remotely and so many other opportunities.*

Sample of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses:

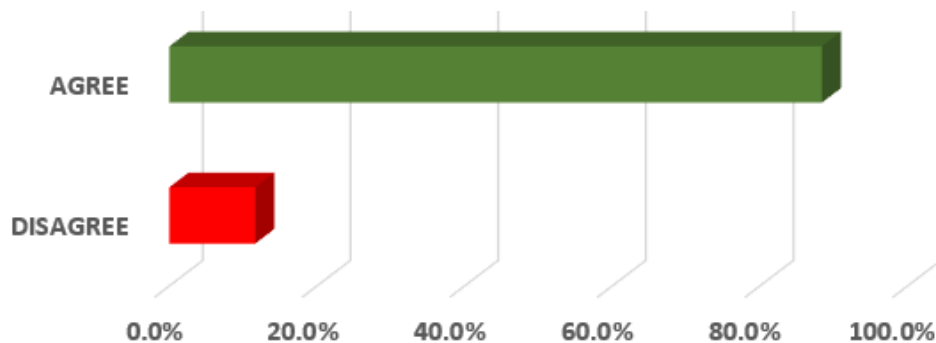
- *This was one of the reasons I took the full license. Give that to intermediate licencees and I might not have bothered.*
- *I think there is a good reason that foundation and intermediate licences are restricted and this should not change.*
- *Let us have some incentives for progressive licensing.*
- *It distracts from the term "Radio", what next, no radio's just internet!*

Question 11 (section 5): Beacons

Do you agree with our proposed changes to Beacon operation?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
25.8%	46.9%	6.9%	2.7%	17.8%



Sample of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses:

- *Great for running APRS gateway, can finally ping back. Isn't that how it's supposed to work?*
- *Yes, a good idea, beacons are cool fun projects, it would be great to see more of them, esp on UHF/VHF.*
- *Speaks to the hobby/experimentation side of the hobby. Much like the proposed changes to allow foundation/intermediate to remote control a rig*
- *I agree in principle with the relaxation of the rules on Beacons, Gateways and Repeaters, but I notice that there is no mention of any mechanism for coordinating frequency usage. This could lead to a free-for-all that will not benefit any of us - perhaps OFCOM could give the RSGB the task of coordinating frequency allocation?*

- *Again times have changed. I myself operate remote AIS Receivers and ADSB trackers and have done so since before I had my ticket. So the interest is definitely there for things like this. Give us more freedom.*

Sample of “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree” responses:

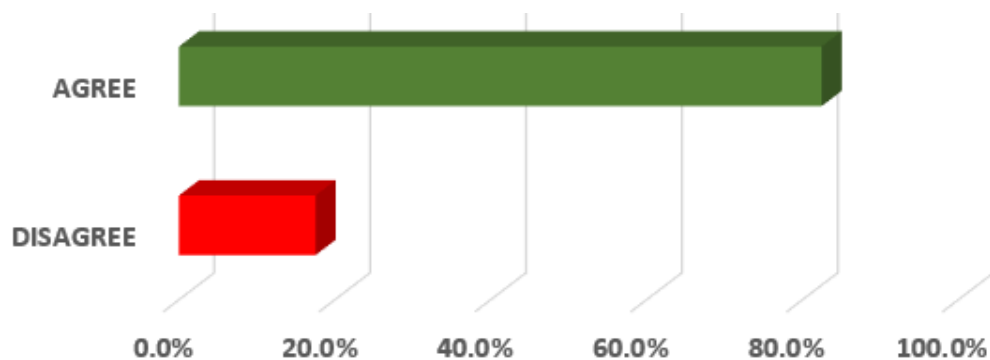
- *Again beacons should be a privilege reserved for full licence holders.*
- *Beacons need to be regulated otherwise they will be transmitting all over the bands with nobody restricting locations.*
- *What about frequency coordination? When does a jammer become a beacon?*
- *Proliferation of beacons could play havoc in an urban location.*
- *This could become a minefield. Your near ham neighbour decides to have one on your favourite band. Perhaps 2M. that could causes you severe RX problems 24/7.*

Question 12 (section 5): Gateways

Do you agree with our proposed changes to Gateways?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
23.9%	40.2%	9.6%	4.0%	22.3%



Sample of “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” responses:

- *There aren't that much people doing that because of regulatory requirements. This is very helpful.*
- *Good idea, get more people connected.*
- *Some ETCC people are overly officious with the NoV process so this is welcome*
- *Yes - lets move into the 21st century and allow some modern experimentation with radio.*
- *I agree but with a suggestion. They've said 5W ERP. Make it 2W ERP.*
- *we need to move with the times. Amateur radio is supposed to be about experimentation, how can we experiment if we are cut off from key technologies?*
- *Another simplification which is welcome*
- *Yep again, this is a great idea to show more traffic and locations of our brothers and sisters around the globe.*

Sample of “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree” responses:

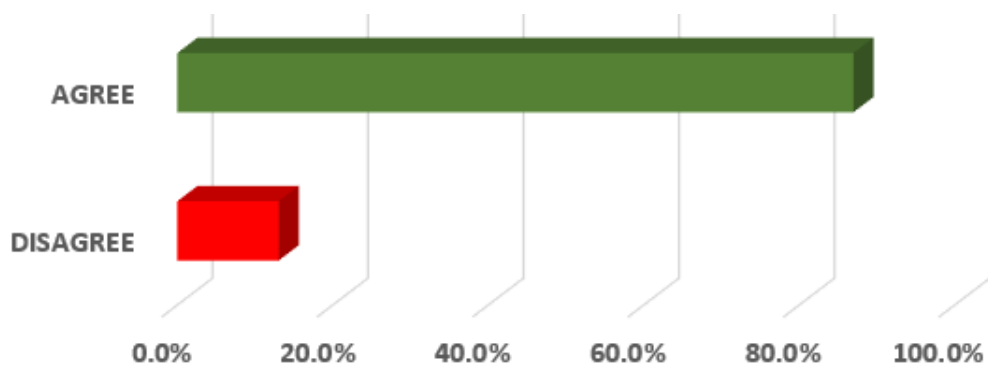
- *The proliferation of such gateways needs controlling. Most are managed very sensibly but there is still an element who would not keep things in order properly.*
- *What about frequency coordination?*
- *There are far too many Gateways at present not being used, cluttering up the spectrum. Here today & gone tomorrow when 'interest' rapidly wanes.*
- *established gateways as without a NOV it will be a free of all if the allocation of frequencies isn't managed.*

Question 13 (section 5): Repeaters

Do you agree with our proposed changes to repeaters?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
24.1%	48.8%	6.5%	4.5%	16.3%



Sample of “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” responses:

- *This would be great, I can't run a packet or SSTV station repeater currently, it would be great to be able to do so*
- *This will allow in-fill or localised repeaters within a specific area of need. A great idea! Similar to the USA.*
- *Repeater use in my area (SE) has been in decline for some time, anything that might encourage more repeater use must be a good thing and improve coverage in blackspots, (useful for RAYNET I think?)*
- *Strongly agree, especially if it would allow certain repeaters to output at slightly higher power.*
- *The more repeaters the better from my experience. So yes, I would be in favour*
- *Might bring 2m back to life if amateurs are allowed to experiment*
- *The vast majority of this use will be temporary repeaters to get over a hill, or part the difficult building. This should significantly help the operations of groups like RAYNET.*
- *We need more repeaters in some areas.*

Sample of “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree” responses:

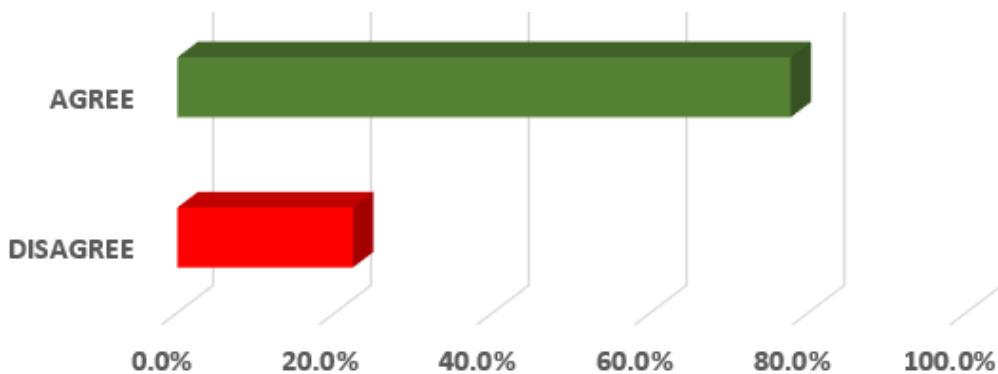
- We need more static repeaters not "pop up" ones at every corner.
- We need to regulate the use of these so the bands are not overcrowded with these
- I feel this could cause problems in some areas with overlapping frequencies, etc
- What about frequency coordination?
- If this means by passing RSGB/ETCC vetting procedure of new repeater applications, then this will inevitably result in a chaotic situation with regards to co-channel interference and a complete breakdown of the existing repeater network. Do we really want more repeaters and gateways, when the existing ones are already under used? We must ensure that all proposed repeaters even 5 Watt ones are approved by ETCC before being allowed on the air. We do not want to open the flood gates for any suspect specification repeaters located close to existing fully vetted and approved ones to pollute the spectrum and likely cause interference to established and well run repeaters and gateways. This proposal is simply ridiculous and unnecessary.
- Bands will be full of repeaters as well as beacons?

Question 14 (section 5): Foundation Licence

**Do you agree with our proposed changes to allow Foundation Licence holders to build their own equipment and access the 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz frequency bands?
Please state "Yes" or "No"**

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
31.1%	40.1%	14.0%	6.4%	8.3%



Sample of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses:

- The extra frequencies would be appreciated. The current limits are not sustainable. You can cause issues with badly constructed antennas and commercial kits as well as equipment modified and constructed by others. The limits places on power for foundation holders means any issues are limited in scope and this will help promote the hobby as well as increasing the desire to become a full holder.
- Encourage innovation and ability, that's what Ham radio is all about.
- I am a electronics passionate but limited now not to use any diy radio transmitters at the moment.
- Yes they should build stuff 100% it's what it's all about

- *No issue with access to 2.4GHz and 5 GHz bands. My only reservation is the risk of the Foundation exam syllabus becoming bloated with additional material to give Foundation licence holders the skills need to build and test their own transmitters.*
- *Again opening more options at foundation level will encourage more people into the hobby*
- *Give equal access to all levels.*
- *I don't think there are many people that would do it anyway, but if it encourages new people with these interest to join and become a licensed user then it has to be a good thing as some of the bands are becoming really quiet. So yes I would be in favour, ultimately.*
- *Agree totally with ability for any grade of amateur to design and build some of their equipment whether an antenna or tx or simple interface. This is how I became a succesful engineer.*
- *Very keen on this one. Experimentation is a key part of this hobby and may also help enthuse those Foundation members to continue with it, because well at foundation you're stuck with very cheap VHF/UHF kit that access bands that few use or investing around a grand to set up a HF station. Enabling building of your own equipment at this level will hopefully bring the barrier to entry for HF down a lot.*

Sample of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses:

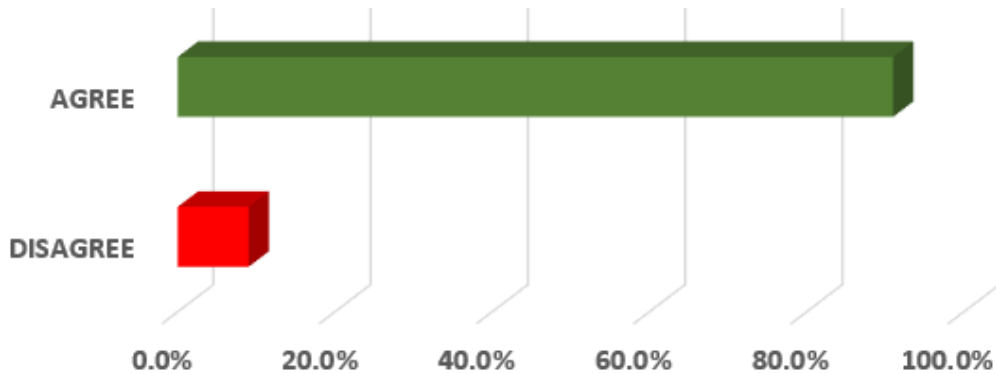
- *Again these privileges should be reserved for a full licence.*
- *I wouldn't feel happy for foundation licence holders to potentially be able to build transmitting equipment or rf amplifiers too many possible issues*
- *This is one of the few things I disagree with. I realise some FL holders may have the technical experience to build their own equipment and operate microwave frequencies safely. However you could cause yourself some serious damage at 2.4 / 5 GHz if you didn't know what you were doing. I think it would be better to reserve these frequencies for more experienced amateurs.*
- *I do not believe that most foundation license holders have the understanding of harmonics and things that give rise to interference*
- *If foundation are allowed to build, more technical knowledge should be required to pass the exam which will gave a negative effect on getting people into the hobby.*
- *Absolutely NO. Their technical knowledge is wholly inadequate.*
- *I'm concerned that the Foundation exam syllabus will become bloated with additional learning to cover testing home-brew transmitters.*

Question 15 (section 5): Airborne use

Do you agree to Ofcom's proposals to permit some limited airborne use?

Summary of survey responses (461 respondents):

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / Don't Care
23.8%	48.1%	4.9%	2.2%	20.9%



Sample of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses:

- *This is the single most important change for UK hams and it's tremendously useful.*
- *Improve safety for glider pilots and paragliding community with appropriate callsign.*
- *The blanket 500mW EIRP limit across all permitted bands may prove tricky. For instance, how many HTs have a suitably low low-power setting?*
- *No reason why you can't as long as you do not cause interference to other users or the equipment on board.*
- *Long overdue although many people may not realise the size of the footprint from an aircraft so the half watt limit is sensible*
- *Seems sensible as long as the CAA are happy. It might also allow some amateurs to operate whilst parachuting, like they do in America.*

Sample of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses:

- *Open to abuse particularly if attached to drones which are already being used in non-acceptable situations.*
- *As an ex PPL, flying is dangerous enough.*
- *There will be NO DEMAND for such a facility.*
- *Absolutely not. Aircraft communication is vital and too much can go wrong with spurious emissions with vital navigation equipment. End of!*
- *Should be more power. Equivalent to the common lowest power setting on most radios.*

Question 16 (section 5): Alignment of terms and conditions

Do you agree to Ofcom's proposed changes in licence format and the alignment of standard terms and conditions?

Due to the nature of the consultation, it was not possible to sample responses for this complex question.

Question 17 (section 3): Changes to licence terms and conditions

Do you agree to Ofcom's proposed changes to the licence terms and conditions?

Due to the nature of the consultation, it was not possible to sample responses for this complex question.

3. Additional Survey Feedback

In our survey, we asked “Overall, how do you feel about the proposed changes?”. The responses were as follows:

These are generally sensible changes	70.0%
Ofcom could have gone further to make things simpler	18.6%
Ofcom has gone too far and made things too simple	8.7%
Other	2.6%

Responses for “Ofcom could have gone further to make things simpler”:

- Increase power for foundation licence holders to retain amateurs
- make foundation licence easier to obtain
- Always about to do this.
- 2 levels of license not 3
- Some people will still regard Foundation as too hard
- Foundation power level at VHF/UHF/2.4/5GHz should be higher and low-power repeater operation by Foundation
- Full licence route for people who either unable to or don't want to build their equipment just use commercially available Radios and aerial. We only need to comply with Ofcom rules bandwidths etc. Not build or strip down to repair Radios. You don't have to be mechanic to drive a car, you follow the highway code and laws relating to motor vehicle use, buy them from a manufacturer and take them back for servicing or repair.
- Disability access? As foundation level with cognitive disabilities and physical impairment I can't study and retain info to pass exams.
- They tend to overcomplicate things when they don't need to be
- 2 tier would be easier
- Should have made two exams
- Would like to see a return to 2 tier licensing with me increased power limits for current Foundation & Intermediate Licence holders
- Abolish foundation and intermediate and just have one type of license
- Still some clarification needed on repeater NoVs
- I would like to have seen for HF Only, Foundation 50 watts. Intermediate 200 watts and Full 1000 watts. Given the current difficulty being heard internationally with today's interference and propagation problems.

- There are points which need clarification or rewriting to remove confusion.
- Remove the need for a licence
- Testing with accredited examiners in house and access to callsign allocation could be implemented now tests are going full online.
- Too much to digest on some sections

Responses for “Ofcom could have gone further to make things simpler”:

- Simplifying too many things can make it seem that the end result is of little value.
- They may as well not have a licensing scheme and let all and sundry get on the air.
- Clearly there is a total lack of understanding
- Frequency allocation is important to avoid interference
- It looks like a cost-saving exercise disguised as improvements.
- Keep callsigns in chronological order. No to 1K w out.
- The hobby has already been damaged by inadequate technical knowledge, along with inappropriate operating practices, (Ex CBERS) repeater keepers having absolutely NO IDEA - technically, No test gear or knowledge how to use such is a CLASSIC Example.
- Supervised use, foundation designing transmitters and using 2.4 and 5Ghz are going too far, other changes aren't too bad, power increase and 1 licence/callsign are good.
- This shows Ofcom does not fully understand Amateur Radio and is willing to make changes for economic reasons rather than technical ones.
- It seems pointless to bring in these changes when Ofcom is already unable or unwilling to police the amateur bands. There has been regular, frequent abuse on two metre band in the west midlands. Despite calls to the police (Operators being threatened), Ofcom and the RSGB. Nothing has been done. There is no point in changing the rules when existing ones are not enforced.
- Ofcom is not interested , they are just reducing their workload
- They system currently in use is, in my opinion certainly fit for purpose

Responses for “Other”:

- STRONGLY DISAGREE with this
- Ofcom seem to have focussed the changes on making their life easier. With the exception of removing the need for RSL I'm content with the proposed changes.
- I anticipate problems from the 1kW power limit
- Some nice changes, some stupid suggestions. I hope they listen to the responses they get.
- Only being made to reduce costs to Ofcom
- Just make it how people are already doing it. 100w for foundation. 200w for intermediate and 1.5kw for full. Even though some full's are happy to use 10kw as standard.
- Call signs should be treated the same way as a National Insurance Number or NHS number and stick with the individual for life and never be re-issued. I would feel deeply insulted if my old class B licences was re-issued. As for changing call signs every two years the idea is bonkers. For one, it would make tracking down miscreants even more difficult.
- Generally OK but resent losing other call signs
- Needs to be modernised in line with equipment and systems
- There are serious issues with proposals
- RSLs is a real sticking point for me.

4. Training Observations

Within the amateur radio training community, the subjects of a) syllabus complexity, and b) progression to the next licence-level are common. With Ofcom looking to allow simplification and greater flexibility regarding amateur radio licence conditions, some members within the amateur radio training community have suggested that Ofcom considers discussion with the RSGB (and representatives from the training community) regarding a review of the syllabus and requirements for entry into amateur radio.

Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a requirement for the Full licence to be compliant with the HAREC standard, it is noted that the syllabus has increased in size, scope and difficulty with each recent syllabus revision, and that the 2019 revision saw an increase in electronics and RF theory being added to both Foundation and Intermediate, with the latter allegedly being at the direct request of Ofcom. A subsequent decline in progression to higher licence levels has been noted since the 2019 syllabus revision.

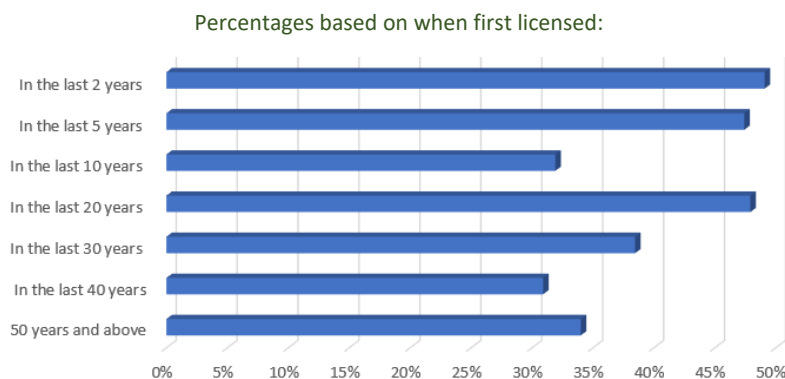
To help to ensure the growth and accessibility of amateur radio in the UK, it is felt by some members of the training community that the decision to increase the exam difficulty and continued focus on construction theory be revisited. The majority of radio amateurs obtaining a licence in the 21st century no longer design and build their own transceivers, so do not require the same level of theoretical construction knowledge and experience as previous generations, especially not at lower licence levels, and it is felt that this should be reflected in training and examinations.

As a part of our survey, we asked whether the RSGB's approach to exams was considered appropriate. In the main, it was felt that is "about right", however the survey highlights that those who have held a licence for 30 years and over are more likely to feel that the exams need to be made harder, whilst those licenced in the last 20 years would benefit from a reduction in the amount of electronics and RF topics covered in the current RSGB exams. Our group wish to propose that Ofcom considers requesting a review of the examination syllabus with the RSGB, with a view to:

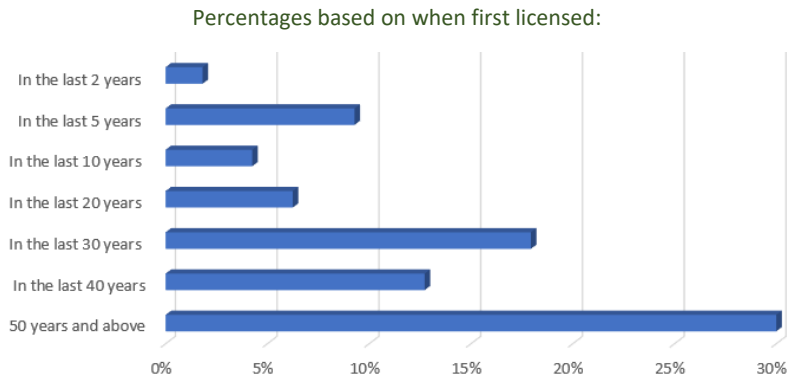
- a) Reflecting what the radio amateurs of today and tomorrow need to know, not what those licensed half a century ago were required to know,
- b) Focussing primarily on what's needed to comply with licence conditions, non-interference and safety,
- c) Making entry to amateur radio more accessible and relevant, with the minimum of hurdles and administration

Below are the responses to specific questions asked about exams and syllabus:

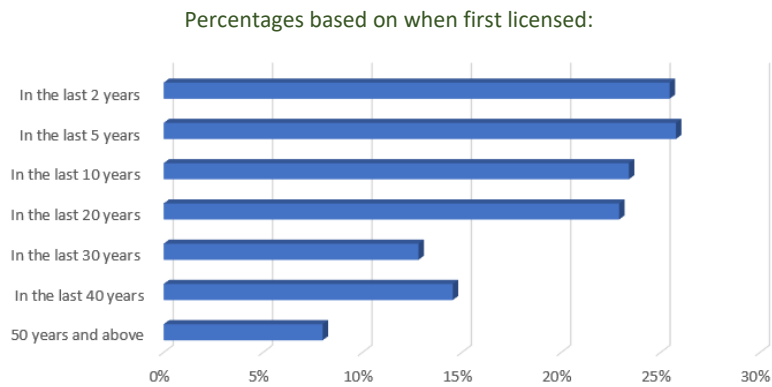
Question: "The RSGB's current approach to exams and syllabus is about right"



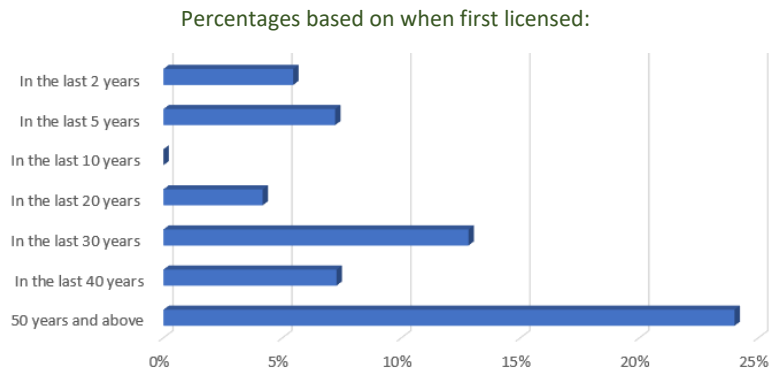
Question: "The RSGB's has "watered down" exams and syllabus too much"



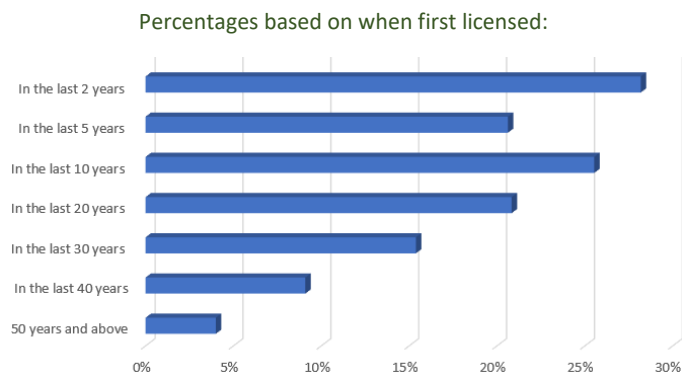
Question: "The RSGB's exam syllabus is bloated and needs to be slimmed down"



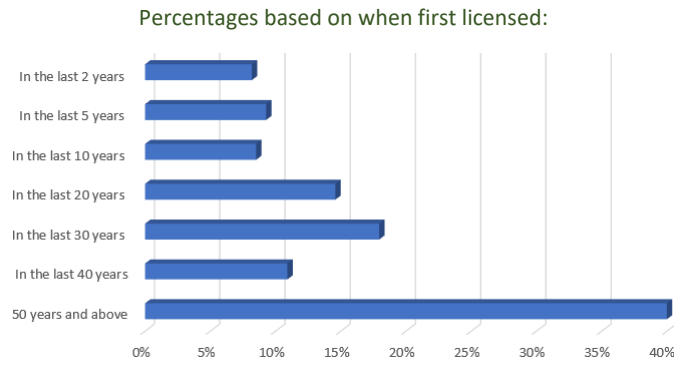
Question: "I'd like to see exams made harder"



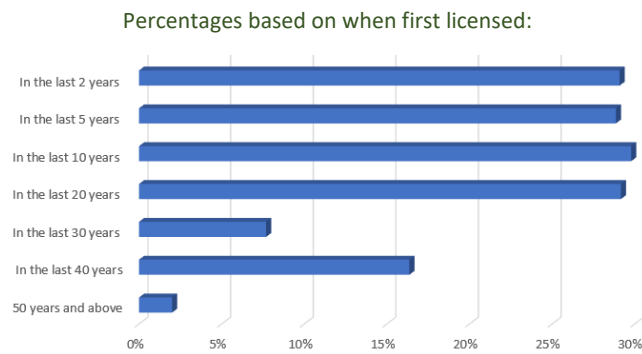
Question: "I'd like to see exams made easier"



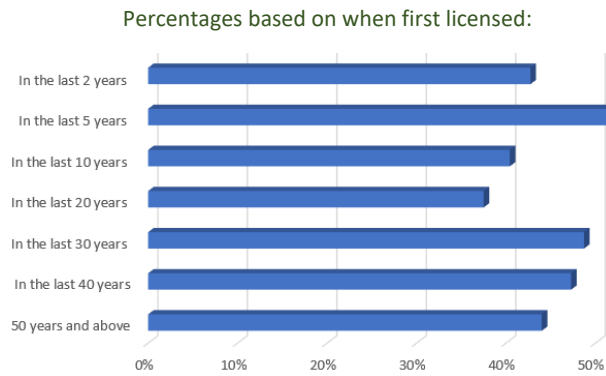
Question: “Exams should have more theory-based content (electronics, RF, etc)”



Question: “Exams should have less theory-based content (electronics, RF, etc)”



Question: “Exams should have more content around operating procedures”



5. Survey Demographics

For information, here is a breakdown of the survey demographics:

Respondent's Licence Level	Number	Percentage
Foundation	132	28.6%
Intermediate	74	16.1%
Full	242	52.5%
Non-UK	2	0.4%
Not licensed	11	2.4%

When was respondent first licensed?	Number	Percentage
In the last 2 years	110	23.9%
In the last 5 years	97	21.0%
In the last 10 years	47	10.2%
In the last 20 years	48	10.4%
In the last 30 years	39	8.5%
In the last 40 years	55	11.9%
In the last 50 years and above	50	10.8%
Not licenced	13	2.8%
No answer	2	0.4%

6. Conclusions

The feedback from the amateur radio community to the proposed changes is, in general, very positive, subject to a few areas of concern highlighted in our response.

We hope that our survey provides Ofcom with some useful feedback based on a sample of the amateur radio community, and we look forward to Ofcom's response to the consultation in due course.

Submission End.